

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 TRSE-00 COME-00 OPIC-03

CIAE-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 SP-02 CIEP-01

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-02 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01

H-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /083 W

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R 281503Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4491

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DEPT PASS AID

DEPT PASS AMBASSADOR PICKERING

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: USJOJC, EGEN, JO, US

SUBJECT: US-JORDANIAN JOINT COMMISSION - WORKING GROUP ON
TRADE AND INVESTMENT

REF: STATE 090899

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED PROPOSAL CONTAINED REFTEL WITH JORDANIAN
CHAIRMAN OF JOINT COMMISSION DR HANNAH ODEH. HE APPRECIATED
FOLLOW-UP AND CONTINUES TO BE INTERESTED IN WORKING OUT AGREED
APPROACH IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT AREAS. HOWEVER, HE DOUBTS
THAT THE APPROACH SUGGESTED IN REFTEL, I.E., SEVERAL AMERICANS
SPENDING ONE WEEK IN JORDAN, WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO THE TASK,
EVEN WITH ADVANCE PREPARATIONS BY US TEAM. HIS PROMARY CON-
CERN IS NOT AS MUCH ON THE US SIDE AS IT IS WITH JORDANIAN
PARTICIPATION. HE BELIEVES THAT UNLESS THERE IS SOME REASONABLY
WELL-DEFINED FOCUS FOR WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION, THERE
SIMPLY WILL NOT BE ANY CONCRETE RESULTS. --AND HE
APPEARS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

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WHICH WOULD LEAD TO AN INCREASED FLOW OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT,

PARTICULARLY FROM US INVESTORS. (HE IS LESS INTERESTED IN TRADE ASPECTS OF JOINT COMMISSION, BUT WE FEEL WE CAN INCORPORATE THEM SATISFACTORILY IN THE COURSE OF THE WORKING GROUP'S VISIT.)

2. ODEH RECOMMENDS THAT BEFORE THE US TEAM COMES A CONSULTANT SHOULD PREPARE AN ASSESSMENT OF JORDANIAN INVESTMENT CLIMATE AND IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS. THE CONSULTANT'S REPORT WOULD, IN HIS TERMS, REPRESENT "DIAGNOSIS OF JORDANIAN SITUATION". THE JOINT WORKING GROUP COULD THEN CONCENTRATE PRIMARILY ON DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES AND/OR PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM AREAS. WITHOUT THIS RELATIVELY OBJECTIVE FOCUS FOR JOINT WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS HE FEELS THERE WOULD BE INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION AND MINIMAL RESULTS.

3. IN GENERAL WE AGREE WITH DR ODEH. THE ORIGINAL REASON FOR RECOMMENDING CREATION OF JOINT WORKING GROUP WAS TO AVOID PREMATURE DISCUSSION IN JOINT COMMISSION MEETING AND TO PROVIDE MECHANISM FOR SYSTEMATIC AND INFORMED APPROACH TO PRIVATE SECTOR AREA. WE SHARE ODEH'S CONCERN THAT EVEN WITH ADVANCE PREPARATION IN US RELATIVELY LARGE JOINT WORKING GROUP WOULD PROVE TOO UNWIDELY TO ACCOMPLISH ITS TASKS IN TIME PROPOSED IN REFTTEL. WE, THEREFORE, ENDORSE HIS PROPOSAL THAT TEAM VISIT BE PRECEDED BY PREPARATION OF REPORT BY KNOWLEDGEABLE CONSULTANT. WE HAVE NO SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PROVISION AND SELECTION OF CONSULTANT. PERHAPS OPIC, STATE OR COMMERCE DEPARTMENT HAVE SOMEONE ON THEIR STAFF WITH COMPETENCE TO ASSESS JORDANIAN INVESTMENT CLIMATE. ALTERNATIVELY, PERHAPS AID COULD CONTRACT FOR SUCH A PERSON. WE SEE THE WORK OF THIS CONSULTANT AS FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON INVESTMENT AREA, BUT DEPENDING ON PERSON SELECTED, HE COULD ALSO REVIEW TRADE AREA. WE DON'T SEE TRADE AS BEING AS COMPLICATED AND POTENTIALLY DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH AS INVESTMENT AND THEREFORE ARE SOMEWHAT LESS CONCERNED WITH ADVANCE PREPARATIONS IN THIS AREA. OPIC SHOULD BE ABLE TO JUDGE HOW LONG STUDY OF THIS SORT MIGHT TAKE. WE ASSUME ONE TO TWO MONTHS WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PREPARE ADEQUATE GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF INVESTMENT CLIMATE, TO IDENTIFY PROBLEM AREAS AND TO SUGGEST POLICIES AND/OR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROGRAMS TO BE CONSIDERED BY JOINT WORKING GROUP.

5. ALTHOUGH THIS APPROACH WILL RESULT IN DELAY, THIS DOES NOT TROUBLE US OR THE JORDANIANS. WE ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH DEVELOPING SENSIBLE APPROACH THAN MEETING PARTICULAR DEADLINE. ASSUMING CONSULTANT COULD BE SELECTED IN MONTH OR SO, WE COULD AIM AT JOINT REVIEW OF HIS MATERIAL BY SEPT 1 AND THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

6. CURRENT VISIT OF AMBASSADOR PICKERING TO WASHINGTON
PRESENTS USEFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERESTED AGENCIES TO
DISCUSS THIS PROPOSAL FURTHER AND PROVIDE THEIR REACTIONS.
SUDDARTH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMITTEE MEETINGS, FOREIGN TRADE, INVESTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975AMMAN02830
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750148-0911
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975049/aaaaahxb.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 090899
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <02 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-JORDANIAN JOINT COMMISSION - WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT
TAGS: EGEN, JO, US, USJOJC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006